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FLEXIBLE LEARNING – EXPERIENCES FROM A NORWEGIAN EWMA-ENDORSED POSTGRADUATE COURSE IN WOUND HEALING

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Flexible learning is being developed at Buskerud University College to satisfy the need of postgraduate students to combine studies with work and family responsibilities.

Flexible learning uses technology to integrate both activity and interaction among students and teachers. This Norwegian course builds upon a theory of teaching and learning online. The course uses the learning platform Blackboard in combination with 4 face-to-face meetings of 2 days each. Students came from the far North to the south of Norway for the total of 8 days teaching in Drammen. Between meetings they work with clinically relevant tasks individually, or in groups of maximum 6 students. Online communication is partly made through formal student responses on tasks posted in Blackboard and partly through discussions established by students or teachers online.

The 15 ECTS programme started in September 2008 and ended in April 2009. 34 nurses, with a minimum of 2 years experience, have now completed the first Norwegian EWMA-endorsed course in wound healing.

It is concluded that communication using Blackboard has been varied. Some students have communicated extensively online whilst others have been limited in their take-up of the technology. When geography was not a hindrance students favoured physical meetings rather than meetings online. Students seem to be more comfortable with traditional rather than computer-based learning. Students have requested more response from teachers on written material posted in Blackboard.

Experience gained so far on this EWMA-endorsed course should lead to further improvements in the future to both online and face-to-face learning.